

**Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Minutes of Meeting on 17th May 2016 at the Springhead.**

1. *Present:* Chris Balfe, Liz Brierley, Mark Cribb, Bill Davidson, Peter Dye, Bill Egerton, Tony Ferrari, Keith Johnson, Colin Marsh, Andy Price, Doug Watson.
Apologies. Mike Blee, Katrina Blee, Huw Llewellyn.

2. *Introduction*

BE welcomed the Group, and explained that this meeting was intended as a handover from the Sutton Poyntz Society, who had taken the initiative on Neighbourhood Planning so far, to the group of people who had volunteered to serve on the Steering Group. It was hoped to appoint a Chairman and Secretary for the Group during this meeting, but for the purpose of handing over, BE suggested that he chair this meeting, in the absence on holiday of MB.

In some general discussion, it was noted that what we were now attempting to do would be very difficult to achieve, and could become divisive. While a number of communities have been successful, some others, such as Sherborne, have failed. We must be aware of this danger, and be willing to stop if the process is in danger of tearing our community apart.

3. *Group membership*

Each member of the Steering Group then gave a short introduction to themselves. BE handed out a list of Group members, to which phone numbers would be added for distribution. In addition to the people listed above, John Crisp had volunteered to help at a subgroup level. Keith Hudson had also volunteered to serve; he has a second home in Sutton Poyntz so may not qualify as a Forum member, but it was agreed that he could provide a valuable additional perspective, and should be invited provided he was able to offer a meaningful amount of time (**Action BE**).

It was stressed by several members that the Steering Group must be well separated from the Sutton Poyntz Society. From this point of view, MB and BE, as Chairman and Secretary of the Society, were happy to serve on the Steering Group but did not think it appropriate to serve as Officers. It was also noted that all those who had volunteered for the Serving Group were members of the Society; it would be useful to include some non-members – LB suggested she might be able to find someone (**Action LB**).

One of the challenges for the Steering Group was to ensure that its own membership was representative (the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group as drafted place this responsibility on the Steering Group). Clearly getting younger members to serve would be difficult as they all tend to be busy with jobs and families, but it was noted that the Group would benefit from more female representation. It was proposed that a Newsletter #2 should be issued quite quickly, among other things to identify biases in the present Group membership and to ask for more volunteers.

4. *Steering Group Terms of Reference*

Draft Terms of Reference had been distributed with the calling notice for discussion. It was hoped that these could be ratified by the Society (in its role as Neighbourhood Forum) at its next Committee Meeting on 9th June. Members were asked to send any comments or requests for amendments to BE (as Society Secretary) in good time for that (**Action all**).

TF noted that the paragraph on Conflicts of Interest, as drafted, could potentially disbar everyone from voting on issues. He volunteered to seek advice from Council Officers on a form of words that is workable (**Action TF**).

On Conflict Resolution, it was noted from the Guidance Notes on Neighbourhood Planning Grants that a Facilitation Support package is available on demand to provide mediation. This should be

included in the Conflict Resolution description.

It was noted that the Terms of Reference provide for subgroups to be created to carry out specific aspects of the work. It was agreed that this would be important, and that possibly the Steering Group membership may reduce from the present, with members moving onto chosen subgroups.

BE noted that a total of £15k of grant money was available to the Steering Group for the hire of consultants and other costs. It was agreed that early training for Steering Group members was important, and also the involvement of consultants in early community consultations. On the selection of consultants and training providers, it was agreed that we should seek advice from some of the other groups in Dorset that have completed or nearly completed their Neighbourhood Plans; CM will contact Cerne Valley, LB Lodgers, and BD Piddle Valley (**Action CM, LB, BD**).

5. *Application document*

A draft Application document had also been distributed with the calling notice, containing an application for the chosen Neighbourhood Area and an application for the Society to be granted Neighbourhood Forum status. These applications would, when ready, be sent to the Borough Council. BE explained that we would not be in a position to obtain grant funding for Group training until the application had been submitted, so the Society had decided to get the application to an advanced draft stage.

AP noted that certain parts of the draft text show a “village centre” bias, rather than describing the whole community. He agreed (**Action AP**) to provide a next draft to correct this, and a few other comments made by Group members:

- A comment slightly dismissive of the use of dressed stone;
- Inclusion of the nursery and car repair works in the list of village facilities, and rewriting of a sentence referring to the Cartshed;
- Reference to the AONB in the section on Natural Boundaries;
- Correction of the number of houses in the paragraph on Population Size, and reference to the some of the numbers in the Table being estimates.

Members were asked to submit any other observations to AP.

6. *Appointment of Chairman and Secretary*

No volunteer was found for the post of Chairman. Two solutions were discussed. Firstly, we looked at whether there were any people who had not volunteered for the Steering Group who might possibly be persuaded to take the role. MC mentioned two names, and will speak to them (**Action MC**). Failing that, it was suggested that a way forward might be for MB to resign his Chairmanship of the Society, so that he could take up the arguably more important role of Steering Group Chairman.

MC offered to take up the role of Secretary.

7. *Next Meeting*

It was agreed that we should try to meet again in about 2 weeks. BE will email proposed dates (**Action BE**).

BE closed the meeting with thanks to all for their participation.